

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7942

AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T PRAGUE 901

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PO, CZ

SUBJECT: FURTHER DETAILS ON CARVALHAS VISIT

REF: PRAGUE 0880

1. PORTUGUESE EMBASSY SOURCE APRIL 22 FURNISHED FURTHER DETAILS ON VISIT OF DEPUTY MINISTER FOR WORKS CARVALHAS (CORRECT). VISIT WAS ON APRIL 15, AND TOOK PLACE DURING LAYOVER AT PRAGUE AIRPORT. THAT MORNING SOURCE HAD CALL FROM CZECHOSLOVAK MFA INFORMING HIM OF VISIT AND ASKING (SOURCE SAID ACTUALLY URGING) HIM OR AMBASSADOR OR BOTH TO BE PRESENT AT AIRPORT. (LISBON HAD NOT INFORMED THEM OF VISIT.) APPARENTLY CARVALHAS WAS EN ROUTE EAST BERLIN FOR A CONGRESS, AND REQUESTED AIRPORT MEETING WITH HIS COUNTER-PART IN CSSR MINISTRY OF WORKS.

2. MEETING WAS SCHEDULED TO LAST THREE HOURS BUT WAS CUT TO ONE BECAUSE OF FLIGHT PROBLEMS. PRESENT FROM CZECH SIDE WAS A DEPUTY OF MINISTER OF WORKS, ONE OF HIS ASSISTANTS, AND MFA PORTUGUESE AFFAIRS OFFICER TUZEK. ACCORDING SOURCE, CARVALHAS SEEMED SURPRISED TO SEE EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES THERE. HOWEVER, HE SPOKE FORTHRIGHTLY ABOUT "COMBATTING WORLD IMPERIALISM" AND THE LIKE, WHILE CZECH DEPUTY MINISTER REFRAINED CAREFULLY FROM ENDORSING ANY OF CARVALHAS' STRONG REMARKS. SOURCE SAID IT SEEMED EVIDENT TO HIM THAT CZECHS WERE TRYING TO KEEP THEIR DISTANCE FROM CARVALHAS, AND WERE INTENT ON HAVING EMBASSY REPS THERE AS HELPFUL COVER FOR THE SECRET

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MEETING. SOURCE HAD IMPRESSION CZECHS WERE EMBARRASSED BY

PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS AND WERE TRYING TO AVOID ANY EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT.

3. DURING CONVERSATION CZECH MENTIONED THAT CARVALHAS WAS SECOND HIGH-RANKING PORTUGUESE VISITOR TO PRAGUE LAST WEEK, WHICH WAS NEWS TO PORTUGUESE EMBASSY. THEY TELEPHONED THEIR EMBASSY IN EAST BERLIN APRIL 21 AND PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR THERE HAD NOT KNOWN ANYTHING ABOUT VISIT UNTIL HE READ ABOUT IT IN GDR PRESS. (CZECH PRESS APPARENTLY HAS NOT MENTIONED CARVALHAS VISIT.) FOLLOWING VISIT SOURCE MOTORED TO VIENNA AND TELEPHONED A FRIEND WHOM HE TRSUTS IN MFA IN LISBON (USING CIPHER), SINCE THEY DO NOT TRUST CABLES TO LISBON ANY MORE.

4. CARVALHAS DID NOT (CONTRARY TO REFTEL) USE TERM "COUP DE PRAGUE." HE DID SAY, ACCORDING SOURCE, THAT "WE -- THE ARMY AND THE PEOPLE -- WILL TAKE TO THE STREETS IN LISBON NEXT WEEK." SOURCE INTERPRETED THIS TO MEAN AN ATTEMPTED COUP DE PRAGUE, AND ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD ACTUALLY TAKE PLACE, OR THAT IT WOULD SUCCEED IF ATTEMPTED, HE DID WANT TO WARN LISBON (WHICH HE DID IN PHONE CALL) AND US GOVERNMENT OF POSSIBLE DANGER OF STREET VIOLENCE.

5. COMMENT: WE DO NOT MEAN TO BELABOR THIS REPORT, PARTICULARLY THE WARNING ABOUT TAKING TO THE STREETS, WHICH MAY NOT HAVE BEEN MEANT IN THE SAME WAY SOURCE TOOK IT. HOWEVER, FACT OF CARVALHAS VISIT ITSELF IS OF SOME INTEREST, PARTICULARLY, FROM WHERE WE SIT, THE APPARENT CZECH ATTITUDE OF KEEPING PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS AT ARM'S LENGTH.
PERRY

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